

WELCOMING REVEREND MICHAEL D. PFINGSTEN

(Mr. MANZULLO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MANZULLO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Reverend Michael D. Pfingsten, the U.S. House of Representatives guest chaplain for today.

Mike is a Lutheran pastor of 19 years; and he and his family have joined us from Harvard, Illinois, where Rev. Pfingsten is pastor of St. Paul Lutheran Church.

Rev. Pfingsten earned his B.A. in History at Concordia College and Masters of Divinity in History at Concordia Theological Seminary.

On this day in 325 A.D., Christian bishops gathered to discuss the essentials of the Christian faith at the first Council of Nicaea. I am delighted that Rev. Pfingsten, a man who can truly appreciate the significance of this day, was able to lead us in prayer.

DEMOCRATS FUND RIGHT PRIORITIES

(Mr. WILSON of Ohio asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WILSON of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, this week the House will consider the 2008 Homeland Security Appropriations bill, which addresses our most pressing security needs in America.

This legislation makes many of the recommendations of the 9/11 Commission a reality. It puts new emphasis on protecting our ports and our rail and transit systems. Aviation security is also strengthened with improvements to baggage screenings and a requirement that doubles the amount of cargo screened for explosives on passenger aircraft.

And the bill makes critical investments into border and immigration security as well, by increasing the number of Border Patrol agents to a record 17,800 agents in all.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, this legislation provides for the protection of our Nation while ensuring that taxpayer dollars are well spent by acquiring accountability of our tax dollars.

ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY

(Mr. WILSON of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, this week Democrat leaders will begin pushing their appropriations bills through the House without proper analysis or consideration.

Less than a year ago, the Democrats' top House leader proclaimed that her caucus was committed to restoring integrity to Congress. Specifically, she stated that "Democrats would bring

full accountability and transparency to all earmarks, those in the authorization bills as well as those in appropriations bills." Yet today, even Democrat CNN has editorialized that promised reform is not happening.

Last year, Republicans passed legislation to identify all earmarks by the sponsoring Members' names and Members being allowed to challenge individual earmarks on the House floor.

In conclusion, God bless our troops and we will never forget September 11. We will always appreciate the courage of Ronald Reagan who declared 20 years today, "Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall," promoting freedom in Berlin and victory over communism.

NAFTA IS FAILED TRADE MODEL

(Mr. MICHAUD asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MICHAUD. Mr. Speaker, NAFTA held a great promise to provide workers in Mexico and the United States a livable wage. It simply hasn't lived up to that promise. Illegal immigration has increased.

The number of undocumented Mexican workers who live in the United States has skyrocketed in the NAFTA era from an estimated 1 million in the mid-1990s to about 6 million today.

While many people talk about closing down the U.S.-Mexico border, few care to confront the root cause of this issue: the failure of the NAFTA model to provide sustainable livelihoods for workers in Mexico. Over 1 million Mexican farmers lost their livelihoods due to NAFTA-mandated agricultural policy changes. Wages declined for workers.

These are just some of the reasons why one in ten Mexican citizens have made an often dangerous border crossing to the United States.

NAFTA is a failed model. It is time that we change the model. We can't afford to keep approving models based on the same old NAFTA model. And that is what Peru and Panama are, agreements based on the same flawed principles.

IRAQI NATIONAL ASSEMBLY 2-MONTH RECESS

(Mr. STEARNS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, the Iraqi National Assembly plans to take its regularly scheduled 2-month summer recess starting in July. Taking such an extended break demonstrates a lack of urgency on their part and political will on the part of the Iraqi parliament.

Defense Secretary Gates told a Senate hearing last month, "I'll be blunt: I told some of the Iraqis with whom I met that we are buying them time for political reconciliation, and that every

day we buy it with American blood. For this group to go out for 2 months, it would, in my opinion, be unacceptable."

Accordingly, I have introduced H. Res. 469, which expresses the sense of the House that the Iraqi National Assembly should cancel or postpone its 2-month recess and work towards meeting political, social and military benchmarks. I urge my colleagues to join with me in sending a message to the Iraqi parliament that they must work to fulfill their obligations.

OPPOSE COLOMBIAN FREE TRADE AGREEMENT

(Mr. HARE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HARE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong opposition to the pending Colombian free trade agreement. Since 1991, over 2,000 labor organizers have been murdered in Colombia. Many of these cases are never investigated, and the perpetrators go unpunished, ready to strike again.

For 13 years I served as the union leader for UNITE HERE Local 617. If I had born in Colombia, there is a strong possibility that I would not be here today fighting for working class people. My effort for higher wages, better working conditions, and a secure pension could have cost me my life.

Many will argue that the labor rights "fixes" in the May 10 agreement between the USTR and congressional leadership will be enough to prevent the deaths of union workers, but no worker protection provision comes close to addressing the brutal violations of workers' rights that we see in Colombia.

Mr. Speaker, in good conscience, I cannot support a free trade agreement that rewards Colombia with prized access to American markets as its workers live in constant fear.

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SECURE THE BORDERS FIRST

(Mr. POE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, the American people overwhelmingly support border security, but for some reason, some political pandering pundits in Washington, D.C., want to pursue an unwise, open house amnesty policy before dealing with the real first important issue of national security.

It's an issue of trust. I don't think Americans believe our government will really ever secure the border, no matter how many empty promises are made. The reason is too many special interest groups want lax border enforcement for their own political agenda.

Those who want cheap plantation labor and those who want greater political power seem to want the border